

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF
ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS
(Section of the Library Association)

HON. EDITOR: T. I. M. CLULOW
(Kingston-upon-Thames Public Library)

No. 444

NOVEMBER, 1936

Contents

ANNOUNCEMENTS	Page 246
PRONOUNCEMENTS	Page 246
ROUTINE METHODS IN THE LENDING LIBRARY	Page 248
VALUATIONS	Page 253
AN ASSISTANT'S DIARY.	Page 257
A WORD OR TWO	Page 259
BIRMINGHAM, 1936	Page 263
THE DIVISIONS	Page 265
NEW MEMBERS	Page 267
CORRESPONDENCE	Page 268

The Library Assistant ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE next meeting of the Section will be held jointly with the London and Home Counties Branch of the Library Association at Chaucer House, on Wednesday, 18th November, at 6.30 p.m., when Mr. A. J. Wells, F.L.A., of Ilford, will read a paper entitled "The Library and leisure." The President (Mr. F. Seymour Smith) will be in the Chair.

A Dance is to be held at Chaucer House on Wednesday, 25th November, at 7.45 p.m. Tickets are 2s., and may be obtained from Mr. W. C. Pugsley, Branch Library, High Road, Chadwell Heath, Romford, or from any member of the Council.

It is hoped that as many as possible will attend to make this a jolly evening.

At its meeting on 2nd October, the Library Association Council agreed to postpone the date of operation of its notice to terminate the present (1929) Agreement with this Section until 31st December, 1937. Our future is thus assured in present form for at least another twelve months, but it should be realized that the question is only postponed, not finally settled.

PRONOUNCEMENTS

FOR various reasons we have not indulged in the usual pontifications of an editor, since we entered into office. If it has involved some sacrifice of our hypercritical instincts, we have tempered the thought with the realization that librarianship, more than most professions, gives overmuch opportunity for the expression of opinions "full of sound and fury, signifying—nothing." But the present is an opportune time to emerge from our self-imposed silence, and venture a few comments on current affairs. For we are at the effectual beginning of the new professional year, a year that is likely to see decisions made and changes wrought that will profoundly affect the future of us all.

The inescapable question is, of course, Nationalization? We had hoped that this would be treated as *sub judice* until the L.A. had issued their considered report on the matter. Since discretion has not prevailed, we think it necessary to ask that supporters and detractors of the principle should alike refrain from

The Library Assistant

clouding the issue by utopianizing on the theme. The only fruitful line of discussion is the conception of Nationalization advanced by its principal advocates, i.e. those with the experience and influence to turn the phantasm into a reality. One other point occurs to us as worth making. For many the lure of Nationalization lies in its promise of funds beyond those available from present sources. In present circumstances this seems to us no more than a *mirage*. Even if the cost of re-armaments does not completely offset the rising internal prosperity of the country's finances (and even this has a gloomy future forecast for it by economists like Beveridge), there can be no large expansion of expenditure on the social services, and there are many branches of these that will be considered before our claims are heard.

We hear that the possibility of establishing a course of oral tuition in librarianship at a technical school on the Eastern fringes of London is being canvassed. This is a move worthy of support. It is one more indication of a growing realization that the technical colleges, though they may not carry the prestige of their university counterparts, do provide a more effective means of providing our thinly scattered personnel with the oral tuition that is so evidently needed. It will be interesting, as the number of these technical school courses grows, to watch their effects on the examination pass figures. At the same time we welcome the new advanced courses (announced in our last number) at the London School of Librarianship. There must be many in the London area who would benefit by attending one or other of these courses, and it would be a great pity if the innovation were to lapse through the apathy of those it is intended to help thereby.

An otherwise good leader in the October *Library Association Record*, reviewing *Learn and live: The Consumer's view of adult education*, missed what seemed to us a very important point. These adult students express an acute need for a "local habitation" for students, more suitable than either the home or the class-room provide. Surely therein lies an opportunity for the Public Library? Or will it be lost from fear of the Old Bogey, Education? Sheffield has provided study-cubicles. Who will provide common-rooms, in which may be realized the social benefits of fellowship in study and the fruitful interchange of ideas and opinions given free play? Mr. Phillips' letter in our correspondence this month gives some idea of how the need could be met.

T. I. M. C.

The Library Assistant ROUTINE METHODS IN THE LENDING LIBRARY¹

JOHN DENT

CONSERVATISM is a disease of which most librarians and assistants are victims: methods and processes which have been in use for the past two or three decades are kept up, irrespective of their utility or efficiency, with a grim, unquestioning tenacity, merely because we are used to them. Yet simplicity and brevity in routine work are of the utmost importance, inasmuch as the time wasted over unnecessary processes is time which, in an efficiently administered library, can be used for contact and other work of inestimable value. We are far too apt, in fact, to spend our time as office boys, and not as librarians. A few aspects of the routine work of a small or medium-sized library have therefore been selected for criticism and suggested improvements.

I propose to begin with accession methods, and proceed thence to book preparation, charging, and so on. The superiority of the card method over all other systems of accessioning has yet to be fully appreciated in most libraries, so that a brief explanation of its principles will not be out of place. The accessions register is made up of a series of 5 by 3 cards in numerical order, with spaces for accession number, classification number, author, title, publisher, date, vendor, date of purchase, and price. At the foot of the card a space is provided in which the accessioner makes a note of subject and other catalogue entries required for each book. Accessioning must be done by a trained assistant, for the processes of cataloguing and classifying are combined with that of accessioning. The preparation of cards for the catalogue is simplicity itself. The author card is an exact replica of the accession card (omitting, of course, details of purchase), and all subject and other entries for the book are made by heading cards according to the directions made by the accessioner, and repeating the substance of the author entry under each of those headings.

When a book is withdrawn, its card is removed from the accessions register and inscribed "Withdrawn"; the accession number is carried on to a blank accession card, which is placed with the cards next to be used; and the

¹ *Extracts from a paper read at the Margate meeting of the Kent Library Guild, as an introduction to a Round-table Conference on routine methods.*

The Library Assistant

withdrawn card is sorted into a separate sequence, which forms the withdrawals register. It may be that I am biased in favour of the card system by unhappy memories of a twenty-year-old ledger, in which two-thirds of the entries were scored through in red ink, and bore the legend "Withdrawn (date), No. used up, See Ledger X Folio Y."

After accessioning comes the work of preparation for the shelves. In a small library, in which most of the staff duties are performed in the public departments and work-room duties are few and far between, book-preparation should be carried out by the Reference Library staff. Far too often is this work done in haphazard fashion; apart from requests and other books requiring preferential treatment, all new books should be on the shelves three or four days after accessioning. This involves working in fairly strict rotation. As regards the actual routine work involved in book-preparation, I feel that ownership-stamping is usually overdone. It is, I think, usual to stamp all books in three or four fixed places, and, in addition, to stamp all plates, either at back or front, or both. A census of the petty thefts which occur in any library would reveal the fact that some 80 per cent. of the articles abstracted were illustrations: a fact which leads one to doubt the deterrent value of our disfiguring ownership-stamps. Next, the paper-knife, an instrument which is fortunately slowly falling into desuetude, is often handled very badly indeed. Many libraries contain examples of beautifully produced books permanently marred by the carelessness of some assistant who would not take the trouble to cut the last half-inch at the head of the pages. The process of lettering is usually carried out nowadays by means of the electric stylus. If the stylus is properly used, the result is pleasing enough as far as appearance goes; but the pigment is found to flake off very easily, often at the mere touch of the fingers. A more satisfactory method is to print the classification symbol in white drawing ink, using either a pen or a thin camel-hair brush, and when dry to apply a thin covering of copal varnish. Lettering carried out by this method leaves nothing to be desired in appearance and permanence.

A few points in connexion with the issue and return of books are worthy of attention. The date-stamp should be fitted with a locking device, making it impossible for any of the rubber bands to move until the device is released. The reasons for this are self-evident. It is an accepted fact that the work of charging and discharging is greatly facilitated if the accession numbers have been allocated according to a definite plan, say, from 1 to 30,000 for fiction, and 30,001 onwards for non-fiction, thus separating fiction and non-fiction book-

The Library Assistant

cards in the issue. If, in addition, the book-cards for fiction and non-fiction are of different colours, any attempt to take out a fiction book on a non-fiction ticket is immediately brought to light.

A point which arises in connexion with the issue of books is the question of procedure at Bank Holidays and other times when the library is closed. A very common practice, involving the waste of valuable time, is that of stamping all books issued the Monday fortnight before the Bank Holiday in exactly the same way as those issued on the Tuesday (*i.e.* causing books issued on these two days to be due back on the day following the Bank Holiday), and then sorting the issue for the two days into one sequence. A more satisfactory system is to date books issued on the two days in question so as to make them due for return on the Tuesday following the Bank Holiday, as before, but to use a distinctively coloured ink for stamping those books which would normally have been due on the Bank Holiday, and to keep the two sequences of cards separate—the normal issue behind a normal date-guide, the other behind a white card stamped with the distinctive colour. This system of using differently coloured inks is of great value during the longer closing periods of Christmas and Easter.

The question of staffing is closely bound up with that of charging. The ideal, in any lending library, should be to keep the senior member of the staff free from routine duties, and available at all times for the important tasks of assisting readers in the choice of books and explaining to new readers the arrangement of the shelves, use of the catalogue, etc. This ideal appears to be, as yet, unattainable in libraries of the size of those to which most of us belong. Instead, the senior spends most of his or her time at the counter and enquiries are usually made of the assistant shelving books. The difficulty can partly be overcome by issuing a definite instruction (and enforcing its observance) that all enquiries which assistants are unable to satisfy must be referred to the person in charge.

Lending library routine work must be planned if the department is to be efficiently administered. In a small lending library there will not usually be more than three assistants on duty at any time of the day. Of these, the senior should be responsible for discharging, since speed and efficiency are all-important at this point of contact with the public. A reasonably capable senior should be able to work up to a discharging rate of 400 volumes an hour: a rate which should be ample for all normal needs, and which should render queues unnecessary. The second assistant should be responsible for charging

The Library Assistant

and issue sorting (which should be a continuous process throughout the day), and the third for shelving. Shelving on a busy evening is very exhausting work, and it is therefore desirable to make use of a rota whereby no evening assistant shelves for more than an hour at a time. This can easily be done by making lending and reference library juniors interchangeable. From an hour before, and up to, closing time for the lending department, one of the reference staff should be available for such work as making out readers' tickets, assisting in issue sorting, etc.

Other routine work should be allocated throughout the staff, so that each assistant is definitely responsible for one or more things; thus, one assistant will be in charge of reserves, another, of overdues, a third, of Regional Bureau work, and so on. At six-monthly intervals there should be a general re-allocation of work, so that in time each assistant has had experience of each of these special duties.

The telephone is an important factor in modern public library work. The main 'phone should be in the lending library enclosure, with an extension to the librarian's office, and an internal line to the reference library. If the latter is impracticable, buzzer communication can be installed for a trifling outlay.

Routine work connected with reserved books is, in some libraries, unnecessarily involved. The simplest method, which can only be used when the financial officer does not insist on a written receipt being given for all moneys taken, is that making use of numbered printed postcards. On payment of the reservation fee, either the assistant or the reader fills in the author and title of the book in the appropriate place on the card, and, on the other side, the name and address of the reader. The book-card is found in the issue, and a slip showing the reservation number is placed in the ticket to which the book-card is attached. The postcard is ticked, and filed in numerical sequence with other reserves. Subsequent procedure is too obvious to need mention.

Where a written receipt must be given, the counterfoils should be printed in such a way that they constitute the only record of reservations. A space should be provided for a note of the location of the reserved book, and for the date on which the reader was notified that the book was available; any normal queries in connexion with the reserved book can then be easily settled.

It is highly desirable that, when the library possesses more than one copy of a book which has been reserved, the reader shall have the first copy which comes in. This necessitates placing a reservation slip in the tickets on which each copy is issued. Reserve routine work must be kept right up to date,

The Library Assistant

reservation slips being removed from all other copies immediately one copy of the reserved book is available; otherwise, a reader returning a later copy might be refused renewal on the grounds that the book was reserved.

Before I leave the subject of reserved books, may I put forward a plea that the horrible word "Bespokes" should be deleted from the librarian's vocabulary?

There is a wide variety of practice in the unpleasant task of requesting (and later, demanding) the return of overdue books. The most important points are that the final notice should be sent before the fine has accumulated to more than about a shilling, and that it should be followed, after the lapse of a week, by a personal call. It is usual for the library porter to make these calls, in uniform; but it has been found that he is more likely to find someone at home if he is *not* in uniform.

Every member of the staff should take a keen, active interest in display and other publicity and extension work, and should be constantly on the lookout for new ideas which may be useful in planning posters, book-list covers, and other publicity matter. Replenishing the stock on display stands should be a regular routine duty for the senior on duty each morning, whilst the more popular displays may need augmenting during the day.

The effects of the movement towards the abolition of non-essentials from routine processes have, of recent years, been particularly noticeable in the registration of readers. No longer do our application forms demand particulars of age, occupation, and antecedents; parliamentary electors, whether householders or not, are allowed to borrow books on their own responsibility; and the file of completed application forms has taken the place of the borrowers' register. Many libraries still give a running number to application forms, and some number readers' tickets as well: a process which seems quite unnecessary. The number is not needed for the daily or weekly summary of new readers' tickets, nor is it of any value in preventing a reader from signing two application forms.

Queries occur in the best of lending libraries. They fall into two main groups: those caused by faulty discharging, and mis-sorts. When a book cannot be found in the issue under the last date stamped on the label, the previous date should be tried. In many cases the book-card will be found there, but with another reader's ticket. Search should then be made for the correct ticket in the file of unused readers' tickets; if this proves abortive, a pencilled, temporary ticket is given to the reader, the book is discharged, and the in-

The Library Assistant

correct reader's ticket is filed. If, however, search in the previous date does not produce the book-card, the book should be placed on one side for a more thorough search during slack moments; as before, the reader is given a temporary ticket; and when the query is eventually cleared, the reader's ticket found with the book-card is filed. All temporary tickets issued previously and used by readers on any particular day are kept on one side, and at the end of the day are checked in the file of unused readers' tickets, where, if the queries concerned have been cleared up, the permanent tickets will be found. My chief reason for advocating this system is that it avoids a hold-up at the most important service point by obviating the necessity for a protracted search at a busy time. However involved the scheme may sound when set forth in detail, the amount of trouble entailed is negligible.

The last point with which I propose to deal is that of interavailability of readers' tickets. It is high time that every library willing to lend books to visiting readers on production of their own library tickets should have its name entered on a list of all other libraries willing to reciprocate such facilities. It has been found by experience that a letter in the professional press, asking for the names of those libraries willing to co-operate in this way, produces a reply from about forty or fifty libraries; yet hundreds of others, in reply to a personal letter sent on behalf of an individual reader, are found to be in agreement with the principle of interavailability. The absurdity of the present position is obvious: it should be possible to tell an enquirer immediately that he either can or cannot use his ticket at any town which he may be visiting. For this reason I consider the compilation of a comprehensive list, based possibly on the results of a questionnaire, to be urgently necessary.

Problems of space have compelled this review of routine methods to be selective only; many other matters in the domestic economy of librarianship are capable of simplification and improvement. Our wives have learned to con their Beeton with a wary eye: let us do the same with Brown.



VALUATIONS

STANLEY HOLLIDAY

THERE is a new and pleasing tendency among librarians to go for things bald-headed. We half believe that the tribe is really waking up to the possibilities of sustained propaganda, not of the sugar-coated or hesitant variety, but of clear and positive statement. And far more pleasing is a

The Library Assistant

sudden veering towards candour—at times too extravagant—whereby the public is advised of limitations, and is also told in brusque, unequivocal fashion, that if it remains mute, and unexpressive of its wants, then it is cheating itself of the service for which it pays. There is an obvious explanation for this: the profession is finding its feet, and is speaking with the voice of manhood rather than of adolescence.

We are moved to these reflections by a crop of recent pamphlets destined to introduce readers to the nature and scope of their public libraries—welcome reliefs from the long booklists with which we are monthly assailed. Furthermore, bulletins, magazines, and reports are carrying notes and paragraphs of similar introductory intention, and what is highly significant, is the occasional discovery in library magazines of articles rather more abstract and general in purpose than that of ramming book-titles down unwilling throats. True, these have a literary bent, but notices of books are slipped in unobtrusively and sometimes with a considerable degree of cunning. An excellent instance of such an article is an essay on the comparative merits and activities of age and youth entitled "Is it a matter of years?" which we found inside the dreadful salmon-pink cover of the "Reader's guide" from *Halifax*. This essay is interesting and commendable, in that superficially it has little to do with books, but then one sees it can have decided connexions with the makers of current literature. One hopes its author realized its significance in relation to book selection.

Dagenham, *Fulham*, and *Blyth* have each produced an introductory guide for readers. *Dagenham's*, of demy octavo size, is the most elaborate, and we will give a brief analysis of this publication as an example of essential printed matter to be attempted by all library systems.

First, a plain but very distinguished cover on cream stipple paper with a three-colour design. Within, paragraphs in twelve-point type under bold headings in capitals. Wide margins, text easily scanned and read. Matter: what and where the libraries are; a few hints on use; a few do's and don't's. A brief introduction to the Dewey Classification, a briefer explanation of the catalogues. Some common annuals, directories, and reference works, with a list of periodicals taken. (And here's a typical bit from *Dagenham*: "Those papers specializing in photographs of fashionable weddings, the latest mode, and such-like are not included." A pity, *pace* Messrs. O'Leary and Pugsley, for some really valuable and exclusive stuff gets into *The Sphere* and *The Illustrated London News*. Archaeology and ethnology owe a big debt to the latter.) Neverthe-

The Library Assistant

less, here are ten pages of letterpress and a useful outline map of the Urban District with the libraries clearly marked, and the whole may be considered a first-class specimen of its type.

Sheffield's annual report also contains matter relative to the introduction of readers to the use of libraries. Over and above classes for children, much of the reference staff's time has been spent in making available (in the educative sense), "the facts stored in books," for *Sheffield* states that "during recent years the proportion of readers unable to use the reference library to the best advantage has increased," which may be explained by the failure of modern education to develop individual initiative. A short course in the use of the Commercial Library, with an examination to clinch it, was given to students of a day commercial college. The results were very successful, and the report notes: "It seems clear . . . that there is a profitable field of work . . . in undertaking training in the use of books as sources of information." In our opinion, this "field of work" is the one legitimate form of library extension that should be undertaken before all others. It is distinctly encouraging to find library authorities and librarians willing to make active interference in practical education. An uninterpreted book-collection is pretty useless, and only by demonstration of the value of his wares can the librarian hope to change the public's conception of him as a book-issuing machine—or something half-way between a rate-collector and Father Christmas.

Birmingham, too, which twice excuses itself—unnecessarily, we think—for decreased issues, has made space and books available for practical use by commercial students. Frankly speaking, *Birmingham's* report is dry. A vast amount of work has been done, which is more than amply proved by eighteen pages of statistics, but the textual matter seems abrupt and lacks the human touch that we might expect from so large a system. As a result there is little to get one's teeth into, and we can quote no more than the awe-inspiring circulation figure—4,388,506—which speaks for itself.

Realizing our avariciousness for all forms of library publicity, *Taunton* has had the grace to send us the paper bag of a cafeteria, which proudly announces that it is "99½ steps from Free Library." We are intrigued by this bag. It satisfies our sense of humour. We should have liked to have known, of course, if it were subsidized, or an unsolicited tribute to *Taunton's* civic importance. However, here is another idea, especially for small libraries, and certainly there are a thousand similar little ways, scarcely exploited, by which public collections of books can be brought to the notice of potential readers. *Leeds*, for example,

The Library Assistant

has had leaflets inserted in the prospectuses of the municipal day and evening colleges—a rather obvious opportunity, which is nevertheless usually missed.

A well-produced report from *Eastbourne* reveals that an uphill but successful struggle is being fought. *Eastbourne* is labouring under very heavy fabric charges which accounted for nearly 37 per cent. of the total expenditure, and the book fund has suffered accordingly. Neither Mr. Hynes nor his Chairman has minced matters. A revolution appears to have been badly needed at *Eastbourne*. The revolution is almost an accomplished fact, and Mr. Hynes looks back on a hectic year with justified satisfaction. Indeed, this is quite an exciting little report. It exudes enthusiasm, and gives promise of much good work to come. Enough is said to prove that the effort of modernization is being and will be thoroughly worth while, and the progress to date must receive congratulations.

The opponents of regional co-operation would do well to consider the paragraphs on the subject which form a cheerful feature of every report we now receive. It is plain that, while certain large services remain martyrs to the cause, the small libraries are losing their sense of isolation. Each lends its mite of books very willingly, and the certainty of being able to satisfy every serious reader, however abstruse his studies, has released a flood of confidence which must be unparalleled in the history of the library movement. Those libraries not yet caught up in the regional net, as for example, *Devon County*, appear eager to participate, and to gain what seems to be recognized as the prestige of playing a part, however small, in a linked-up national service. It is hard to compute what great dimensions interlending will reach when the tools of co-operation are perfected. The first report of the *East Midlands System* shows that 4,600 books were supplied, despite the very elementary state of its union catalogue, chiefly through the voluntary efforts of the six largest libraries with considerable assistance from the N.C.L.

From Rotherham comes an account of the first year's work of the *Yorkshire Regional System* with its zonal organization unique in this country. A fair case is made out for the circulation list method, which, as everyone knows, was adopted rather than form a union catalogue. It would certainly be possible to ask all sorts of awkward questions about the figures which demonstrate the percentage of applications fulfilled stage by stage within the complete circuit of the *System*. About 36 per cent. of the applications were satisfied by the zones in which they were made, but since the total applications received in the *System* just exceeded 3,600, it remains to be seen what will happen when these

The Library Assistant

double and treble themselves. We demur when the combined expenditure on printing, postage, and stationery is cited as "the administration cost," unless it is ruled that "administration" excludes clerical labour and bibliographical research. But prolonged criticism of the *Yorkshire* scheme is little to the point, for its committee indicates that its organization is still in the embryo stage, since there are no precedents of method, in Great Britain at any rate, by which the *System* can proceed.

With our policy of mentioning new-comers to the ever-swelling number of library publications, we must single out *Middlesbrough's* "Book list and bulletin." We regard it as unfortunate that this should be swamped with advertisements, but if the revenue therefrom provides the only means of getting into print, then we condone *Middlesbrough's* policy. And still comparatively young is "Book news" from *Warrington*, in which we hope the written-up essay, the germ of which is there, will continue to encroach upon the long black line of select additions. The *Wallasey* "Reader's guide" has returned to the fold after four years' absence, but our reception of the prodigal must be tempered by our noting defection in print, paper, and layout.



AN ASSISTANT'S DIARY

"SCRIPTOR"

9th September.—Second letter arrived from V. J., via Mr. Editor. Nothing very important, but appreciated nevertheless. Written for the sake of showing that one assistant at least is enthusiastic about his profession. Would to goodness there were many more assistants like this. Mentions the apathy of English Library Assistants. Alas, all too true! "If the main body," says V. J., "of assistants presents such an uninspiring face to its own colleagues, it won't be so much more attractive to the public." Which accounts in large measure probably for the low percentage of library borrowers throughout the country. "How can we attract the public?" is a constant cry. The answer lies in ourselves. If we don't take the trouble to vote, we can't grumble at the government we get. If we assistants don't record our ideas, we have no right to grumble if those ideas are never thought of. This diary, I hoped, would be a medium for ideas and criticisms. But they have been very few and far between. My own poor brain has had to do most of it. And how hard it has had to work sometimes!

The Library Assistant

14th September.—To-day encountered a borrower who was only too willing to pay the small fine incurred, somewhat the opposite to our usual borrower! What cavillings there have been over penny fines! He remarked that "we don't pay much for the privilege of reading all these books." A sentiment so seldom found that 'twas worth recording, surely. So thought how used we all are getting to the many things that are done for us to-day, and how refreshing to find one thankful person.

17th September.—Noticing this morning two trays increase in the issue over that of a week or two back. Chief, of course, mightily pleased on being acquainted of the fact. The daily total, moreover, for the last three or four consecutive days has remained, within ten or so, at the same somewhat better figure than of late. But whether this be the beginning of the winter business, albeit somewhat earlier than usual, or a passing flash merely, 'tis hard yet to say.

23rd September.—Reading this lunch time Col. Mitchell's speech at Margate, which, with that of Mr. Sayers, is inset in this month's *Record*. No time yet for Mr. Sayers, but hard to think what adequate answers he can have to what seems to be so logical and reasonable. If our work is of really national importance, it should be a matter for the State to interest itself in. Else we must say plainly the heads of the State are not competent to have a part in it, which, as Mr. Euclid has so often said, is absurd. However, these are but passing reflections. Second thoughts may be different, especially after reading Mr. Sayers!

7th October.—Spent a few minutes this evening reading Miss Harries and Mr. Pugsley, in the new *ASSISTANT*. We have heard Miss Harries' plaint before. But what else could we expect from novelists? How many of them are, or have been, regular users of a public library, or have any connexion with one? Other professions have from time to time voiced the same sentiments about novels. 'Tis hardly worth much fussing about, surely. Well done, Mr. Pugsley! But you know what a conservative country this is. We don't like revolutions, do we? The remarks about the greater comfort of the staff are timely. But here again so many chiefs put all this talk down to mere laziness on our part. They can't realize the extra efficiency resulting from a thoroughly satisfied assistant. Your last line, Mr. Pugsley, is a gem. I must commit it to memory. Perhaps one day I may have the chance to quote it before a committee!

10th October.—Last month's few days of increased issue did prove to be but a passing flash, the last few days particularly having been very poor. Or

The Library Assistant

perhaps these last few days have but been a temporary slacking down of the beginning of the move? But by this date we should be moving steadily. Looking back a bit, thought how fluctuating our issues are to-day. One can never judge by the date or the day of the week, as we used to when I was beginning my library career, how busy we would probably be. We have to be prepared now for anything almost, which is sometimes annoying or pleasing, as the case may be.



A WORD OR TWO¹

JAMES CRANSHAW

*Forever ! 'Tis a single word !
Our rude forefathers deemed it two.
Can you imagine so absurd
A view ?*

*Forever ! What abysses of woe
The word reveals, what frenzy, what
Despair ! For ever (printed so)
Did not.*

*Forever ! Passion-fraught, it throws
O'er the dim page a gloom, a glamour :
It's sweet, it's strange ; and I suppose
It's grammar.*

*Forever ! 'Tis a single word !
Our rude forefathers deemed it two ;
Nor am I confident they erred ;
Are you ? "*

CHARLES STUART CALVERLEY.

CONSIDERING the catalogue from the public point of view, how can we give a clear and easily understandable idea of the manner in which it is arranged?

We start off in high feather. "This is a Dictionary Catalogue; and the entries in it under authors, titles, and subject-headings are arranged in alpha-

¹ Reprinted from "The Wicket," organ of the Sheffield Libraries' Staff Guild.

The Library Assistant

betical sequence as in a Dictionary." Or, "This is a Classified catalogue—the principal entries are arranged in the same classified order as the books on the shelves. An alphabetical key to the subjects in this classification is provided in the drawers with green labels, while an alphabetical index of books under authors and titles is given in the drawers with yellow labels."

Having thrown the Dictionary at their heads, so to speak, we consider that instruction enough. If we are to believe the school stories of our youth and the heroic biography that not even Carlyle would subscribe to, instruction under a barrage of dictionaries was at one time enough, at least for empire builders. Unfortunately, the users of the libraries have still a sneaking belief that the pen *is* mightier than the sword, and somehow a dictionary at rest is not nearly so instructive a force as a flying one. It is comparatively easy to adjust oneself to a dictionary thrown, flung, cast, pitched, tossed, heaved, hurled, flipped, projected, or propelled; it is not so easy to adjust oneself to words and their compounds on which neither lexicographer, author, nor printer agree.

I have known librarians to enrich the description of their catalogue by calling it a *Simple* alphabetical arrangement of entries. This may be permissible, on the grounds that you must reassure your public at the start that there is no great difficulty about your catalogue order. But the fact remains, that a dictionary is not so simple as it looks, and that the so-called dictionary arrangement in a library catalogue is much more complicated still.

On the subject of compound word forms, I have recently referred to several books on printing style, both English and American, and to various dictionaries and encyclopædias. No jig-saw puzzle or cipher was ever so complicated; it would need another dictionary of compound word usage to show the variations, and for my part, I consider that the public have other and more important tasks than mental gymnastics of this kind.

In this dance of the compounds, the exact style of dress to be worn is not known. It is equally right to wear a one-piece garment, to join up the coat and pants with a belt, or to leave a void between pants and vest like the *houris* in "Chu Chin Chow." It may be that printers are growing more polite, or that they are only growing more economical, but the tendency is to cover up the void. Their old motto might easily have been, "*Honi soit qui mal y pense*"; their modern, "Save the ens and the ems will take care of themselves."

But to return to the arrangement of entries in our catalogues. We cannot ask the public to familiarize themselves with the best printers' style, because

The Library Assistant

there "ain't no sich thing." For instance, why do we print bookstore and fruit-store; handbook and notebook, but source-book; school teacher, but schoolmaster; book collector, but bookbinder; metal work, metal-work, and metalwork, yet always woodwork? Which is right, free thought or free-thought; today or to-day; to-morrow or tomorrow? If to-day is right to-day, what is the matter with yester-day? Is it every man or everyman, every woman or everywoman; and if those words have two distinct meanings, how is the reader to know they will not fall together in the catalogue?

There are two ways of alphabetizing generally recognized by cataloguing textbooks: arrangement by first word, or, if hyphenated, by first portion of word; and secondly, arrangement by the whole of the heading or title treated as a compound. In the days of the old printed catalogue in this country, the second method of "spelling through" was fairly common, but, chiefly under the influence of American practice, the great majority of modern catalogues follow first-word arrangement.

As a result, you get the following in the *A.L.A. Standard catalogue of 1934*:

P. 1503. *Every man in his humour*; and 37 entries farther on:

P. 1504. *Everyman in his humour*.

P. 1503. *Every man's Bible*; and 40 entries farther on:

P. 1504. *Everyman's life of Jesus*.

Similarly, in the *Wilson catalogues*, books printed Metal Work are separated from others printed metalwork by 40 entries; metal craft from metalcraft by 17 entries; and school houses from schoolhouses by 35. Is this arbitrary separation the result of school house instruction or schoolhouse education?

At the risk of seeming to belabour the point, I draw your attention to the *Cumulative book list for 1933-34*, where, on p. 37, there are 70 entries beginning with the word ALL. These are followed by three pages of entries (about 200) ranging from Allen to Allrod, then we find ALL's fair and ALL's well. I hope so! which, translated into good American, reads ALL boloney! Don't you think the alphabetizers are more than optimistic? The reader, having found ALL is grist; ALL-round; ALL-sufficiency; and ALL-time on p. 37, surely does not expect to find ALL's fair on p. 41. All's fair may be true in love or war; it cannot be true in the battle of the cataloguing rules.

Or, consider the instance which drove me to quote the poem by Calverley at the head of this article. In the same publication, "FOR ever England" occurs on p. 797, and 300 entries away, separated by a host of entries with words beginning with FOR, we see "FOREVER and ever" on p. 802. I would really

The Library Assistant

like to add Amen, but from this I am debarred by the next entry **FOREVER** morning, which suggests there is still another day. One must give the alphabetizer another chance, if only to make confusion worse confounded.

It is only when you systematically look for these confusions that you realize how extensive and awkward they can be. To find **BATTLE** fields preceding and separated from **BATTLEFIELD** would not have much sympathy from the Irishman who was treading the tail of his coat; he would naturally expect one to lead directly to the other. To find **BLACK** birds some distance from **BLACKBIRDS** and **BLUE** bird's eye not hand in hand with the **BLUEBIRD** is liable to make the outlook distinctly black, and the air a pretty shade of blue.

It is surely the height of folly to show **NEW** field on p. 1566 and **NEWFIELD** on p. 1578, only a mere 700 entries away; or, **NEW** land the same distance from **NEWLAND**, and **NEW** house from **NEWHOUSE**. Compared with those, **OLD** Father separated from **OLDFATHER** by 120 entries is a mere nothing, and one might be prepared to pass it by, except that it raises the horrible suspicion that these first-word alphabetizers are not unrelated to Lewis Carroll's Old Father William.

As regards helping the public to understand the arrangement of their catalogues, the best they can do is to print the arranging word in heavy type, or, in the case of the card catalogue, to give the arranging word in capitals as a heading. But, useful as this is, it entirely ignores the difficulties arising from variations in the printers' usage on our title-pages. One may expect the public to remember that the **COOKE** he is looking for is spelled with an **E**, but not that the printer prefers **NEEDLEWORK** in one edition and **NEEDLE WORK** in another, or jumps about from **SEA** shore to **SEA-shore** and **SEASHORE**. If we do expect this of our public, we shall find them not even floundering on the seashore, but very much at sea.

It is said that it is easier to follow alphabetization by first word when the arranging word is thrown up in heavy type on the printed page. There may be something to be said for this in small catalogues where the probability is that all variations of printers' usage will show up on one page. The eyes have a habit of running ahead, so that it is comparatively easy to follow in such cases. But outside the music-hall, I have yet to find any person who can read three or four pages forward as demanded by such examples as given in this essay.

And when you come to the sheaf catalogue or the unit-card catalogue, the first-word system breaks down absolutely. The eyes cannot run ahead; they are obliged to look at each entry individually, and the mind is called upon, with some strain, to piece these snap-shots together as a film. The standard card

The Library Assistant

tray is comfortably full when it holds 800 cards; this means that in some of the cases instanced, an entry may be separated by the whole length of the tray or even be in the next drawer.

Compared with these difficulties, the difficulties of the "spelling-through" or word-compounding arrangement are small indeed. There are no exceptions, and the printers' idiosyncrasies have no terrors. It has one overwhelming advantage—SIMPLICITY.

Finally to the staff—it simplifies and speeds up checking. No longer are you called upon to look a fool, when someone asks over the telephone, have you a book called *Seafaring in the 16th century*? You no longer say, "Hold the line," then turn back to the telephone and say, "Pardon me, is it spelled *Seafaring* or *Sea Faring*?" You feel silly, and no doubt to the enquirer you seem silly. Can you blame him?



BIRMINGHAM, 1936

The following account of the Summer School is a composite work, made by dovetailing points from separate descriptions sent to us by N. Tomlinson, W. Tynemouth, and D. G. Williams. No one of these is responsible for the account as a whole.

WE regret to announce the passing of the 1936 Summer School. Many will be the mourners and varied the tributes, but of one thing we are sure—the unanimous opinion will be that this was the noblest school of them all. Its immediate predecessor received but a scanty obituary, though it was worthy of more. And since an account many serve to illuminate the minds of those readers who have not yet reached the city of Birmingham complete with official badge and green-backed programme, we pen this tribute.

To anyone attending for the first time, the first day at the School may be approached with qualms, due to doubts of a busman's holiday, and shyness in strange company. These were quickly dispelled in the excitement of tennis, which was indulged in soon after registration. Memories of a hectic dash to beat Margaret and Muriel to the court are dimmed by memories of a dissertation on fire-escapes which ultimately appeared on the notice-board. By the time dinner is over, our past and our future are in the possession of our neighbour. And so to the Common Room, where a band emitting "Would you?" from the stage eventually tears us from the comfortable depths of an armchair to the more strenuous task of piloting young ladies across a dance-floor. Nor must

The Library Assistant

we omit mention of the welcome extended by a bevy of Birmingham blondes and brunettes who offered, in song, to "tell us library stories that we'd never heard before"! This is certainly not what we anticipated at the Summer School.

Came the dawn—and Mr. Savage, to deliver the inaugural address, a plea for personal service in the lending library which deserved to reach a wider audience.¹

Mr. Grindle declaiming against crooning and Mr. Grindle monopolizing the fair sex to the strains of a dance-band were hardly consistent. We were left to suppose that the librarian should adapt himself to any environment. But Mr. Hinton too. Why the prejudice against vaudeville, Mr. Hinton, in your paper on "The Library as a cultural centre"? Vaudeville on 24th August by the Birmingham staff and on 4th September by the students were uproariously appreciated by a representative cross-section of the profession.

Dr. Offor's lecture failed to rouse any enthusiasm in our imaginations, when merely regarded as a title in the programme (more familiarly known as the hymn-book). But the actual address proved to be an interesting and entertaining account of his troubles with architects, removers—and recesses. Similarly, Mr. Berwick Sayers' name conjured up rather unpleasant associations, but although he openly confessed that he had another edition of *Brown's manual* in the press, his talk on "The Distinguished librarian" met with spontaneous and well-deserved applause. We liked his description of a wife as an "article" which the librarian might acquire! Miss Hummerston's lectures on Children's Libraries, dealing largely with child psychology, had capacity attendances. The subsequent discussion showed the subject to be nearly as controversial a matter as Government control.

The second week, and several new arrivals saw the commencement of advanced lectures, Capt. Wright on County Libraries, Mr. Woodbine on Bibliography, Mr. Jackson on Administration, and others. One of the 1935 students, M. George Falchikov, created a precedent by returning as a lecturer.

A visit to Perry Common and Acocks Green branch libraries (and later to Yardley Wood) gave students an opportunity of appreciating the "fan" or "butterfly" principle of planning, while the "county" folk had the pleasure of touring the Worcestershire County headquarters and branches in weather as glorious as the scenery they passed through. Miss Ferguson kindly enter-

¹ It has since been printed in the October "Library Association Record."

The Library Assistant

tained the party to tea—a rash undertaking in view of the appetites engendered by the lengthy tour!

Of the excursions, two stand out—the visits to Lichfield and Pershore Abbey. On the latter trip, the students were entertained to tea by Mr. and Mrs. Farncombe in the grounds of their beautiful home, Endon, near Pershore. But mention should also be made of Stratford-on-Avon, and of the visit to "St. Joan" at the Birmingham "Rep."

We can only hope that these impressions—they are no more—will whet the appetites of others, and induce them to attend next year. This year's students came from as far afield as Paris and Trinidad, and one enthusiast even cycled from Liverpool overnight. Apart from the valuable material in the lectures, the contacts made and the exchange of views make it a delightful and valuable experience, not to be gained in any other way.

After paying tribute to the lecturers for their splendid work, and willingness to organize impromptu excursions to give practical expression to theoretical opinions, we must conclude on a note of gratitude to Mr. Cashmore and his helpers for their readiness at all times to do anything from producing papyri to producing matches. They did not deem their work finished till they had taken leave of us at the station, and it is due to their efforts that the School was such an unqualified success, and remains so pleasant a memory for three, at least, of its students.



THE DIVISIONS

SOUTH WALES AND MONMOUTHSHIRE DIVISION

THE 1936-37 Session was opened, on 7th October, by J. G. O'Leary, Esq., Chief Librarian of Dagenham, with an address entitled, "Nationalization—kill or cure?" Some forty to fifty members met at the Gabalfa Branch Library, Cardiff, to hear the speech and debate the subject. Mr. O'Leary investigated the subject from the financial, administrative, and Higher Control viewpoints. He mentioned how attention had been forced on to the subject; the principles governing grants in other services; and how central control delays action. It was a fallacy, he stated, that improved conditions and salaries would result, and drew a parallel with educational conditions, instancing pupil-teaching and out-dated, dilapidated school buildings, in spite of a long history of State control. Some small progress was resulting in

The Library Assistant

the library world by the following of the examples set by the efficient libraries, and he trusted to this advance rather than to Nationalization.

Discussion (due to the retiring modesty of the average assistant) was not fast and furious; but it appeared, from what was said, that a large proportion of the meeting was in agreement with the speaker.

On the motion of Mr. Ken Davies, seconded by Mr. Bibey, the meeting accorded Mr. O'Leary a hearty vote of thanks for his address.

YORKSHIRE DIVISION

A meeting of the Yorkshire Division was held in Scarborough, on 30th September, by kind invitation of the Chairman and Committee of the Scarborough Public Libraries.

Between eighty and ninety members devoted the afternoon to an inspection of the new library building. Its pleasing features and air of spaciousness were well admired and envied. Particular interest was shown in the movable issue trays. Altogether the Division felt that the librarian, Mr. Smettem, and his staff were to be congratulated upon their fine library.

Mr. Halliday, a member of the Scarborough staff, who is also a correspondence tutor in Classification, introduced a discussion on "The Library Association Intermediate Examination." Mr. Halliday showed a thorough grasp of the subject, and in the latter part of his paper gave reasons for the consistently low percentage of passes in this examination, which were heartily endorsed by other tutors present. Mr. Halliday gave due consideration and placing to the usual arguments of a large percentage of students' inability ever to pass the examination, due to lack of general education, with the resulting bad spelling and poor English. He considered that before sitting for the Intermediate Examination, students should have studied Classification intelligently whilst working in a classified library. From his own observations Mr. Halliday has been obliged to arrive at the conclusion that many students must be working in unclassified libraries. The lack of general education also meant that students had not been encouraged to apply their own experiences; also in many instances candidates were too young.

Mr. Halliday then developed his theory that too much reliance is placed on text-books and courses which are really only a guide, and cannot do all the work for the candidate. The reliance placed on text-books is apt to let the candidate down, in that the books do not adequately answer the questions set in the examination papers, although these questions are on the syllabus set.

The Library Assistant

Both students and tutors took part in the discussion following Mr. Halliday's paper. The lack of background shown by students was emphasized by several tutors; also incorrect details in text-books from the examiners' point of view. Several tutors stated that on some points they were in doubt as to what the examiners required, but one tutor, who submitted ten points from a recently published text-book to an examiner, found that the examiner agreed with his points of view and not with those expressed in the text-book. It was suggested with great approval that there should not be several correspondence courses in use by different tutors, but that one standard course should be in use, which would be the joint work of the tutors.

The following members contributed to the discussion: Messrs. Macdonald (Leeds), Shaw (Sheffield), Bebbington (Leeds), Cranshaw (Sheffield), Sharkey (Leeds), Walker (Leeds), Bennett (Huddersfield), Cronshaw (Sheffield), Hawarth (Scarborough), German (York), Smith (Dewsbury), and Misses Stevenson (Leeds) and Barber (Sheffield).

The vote of thanks to Mr. Halliday was proposed by Mr. Marr of Sheffield, and seconded by Mr. Smith of Dewsbury.

The Chairman and members of the Scarborough Library Committee were suitably thanked, the proposal being made by Mr. Macdonald of Leeds, with Mr. Sayell of Wakefield supporting him.

KENT LIBRARY GUILD

A meeting was held at Margate Public Library on Wednesday, 23rd September, and took the form of a Round Table Conference on Routine Methods. As an introduction, the Chairman (Mr. J. Dent, of Dover) read a paper on various routine processes, with special reference to small and medium-sized libraries. After an extremely varied discussion, the meeting was adjourned for tea, by kind invitation of Mr. A. J. Gritten, Librarian of Margate, and his staff. The conference continued for an hour after tea; particular attention being paid to the planning of lending-library counters for maximum efficiency.

The next meeting of the Guild will be held on 4th November.

NEW MEMBERS

CENTRAL.—A. C. Angel (Bethnal Green); Miss M. L. Arthur (Lanark County); Miss A. B. Asserson (Hackney); Miss K. A. Barwick (Bristol); Miss F. A. Coles (Weston-super-Mare); Miss M. O. Crombie (Bristol); R. H. Denny (Hendon); D. W. Downes, Herbert Goom

The Library Assistant

(Wallington); Miss R. Keeling (Wandsworth); L. Read (St. Marylebone); R. A. E. Rodway (Wallington); K. J. Savage (Thurrock); F. A. Sharr (National Central Library); L. Stokes (Wallington); Miss M. Tedbury (Islington); Miss I. H. Thorburn (Glasgow); Miss M. Wilson (Belfast).

Midland.—M. T. Ashmore (Northants County); K. Carter (Newark); Miss K. M. Eaton (Birmingham); H. B. Evans (Birmingham University); Miss L. E. Holland (Cheltenham Ladies' College); Miss E. Jerram (Birmingham); Miss R. J. Maggs (Malvern Ladies' College); Miss V. Mason, Miss J. M. Parker, W. L. Saunders (Birmingham); Miss M. M. Sumner (Derby).

Yorkshire.—Miss R. L. Armsby (Shipley); Miss C. M. Astin (County Library, Wakefield); A. V. Greenwood (Halifax); James E. Kemp (Scunthorpe); Miss M. Lord (Goole).

North-eastern.—Miss M. Bird (Durham County, Bishop Auckland); Miss D. Stokoe (Armstrong College Library, Newcastle-on-Tyne).

North-western.—Miss F. M. Collier, Miss E. Lloyd, E. C. Skidmore (Manchester); George Weeden (Salford).

South-western.—Stanley J. Brett (Sandown, I.O.W.).

South-eastern.—Miss M. Montgomerie (Worthing).

South Wales.—Miss W. Lane (Llanelly).

RESIGNATIONS.—Miss C. R. Dallison (Birmingham); Miss J. Lawrence (Leicester); Miss F. J. Smith (Stoke-on-Trent).



CORRESPONDENCE

GULSON (CENTRAL) LIBRARY,
COVENTRY.

THE EDITOR,
THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

14th September, 1936.

DEAR SIR,—

Having read the article "Guidance to readers" with considerable interest, we should like to add some comments and a description of our work. In Coventry, following the redecoration of the lending library last year, the new book stacks were arranged around a central enquiry desk, and two assistants were detailed to serve as readers' advisers.

The following kinds of queries are dealt with: demands for particular books, especially those recently published which may be on order but not yet in the

The Library Assistant

catalogue; information on specific subjects, varying from Pentecostal doctrines, plum wine, Vernier tools, adoption, aero-engines, and pyrotechnics to canoeing, diet, and budgerigars. Many queries are satisfied concerning library services, such as branch exchanges and regional loans. Book recommendations and reservations are received. External reading lists are checked, while others are prepared for borrowers with special interests. We have also to satisfy "general readers" wanting a "good book" or "nice book," whether fiction, popular biography, or travel!

The provision of adequate guides to the stock is always required. In our experience the terminology of the shelf guides must be simple if the guides are to be of maximum service. Mr. McClelland advocates précis of information for new readers. We feel that these might serve a useful purpose if available on request, but that indiscriminate distribution to an indifferent public is not justified. A plan of the shelf arrangement conspicuously placed gives assistance to readers. An efficient catalogue is essential to any library, but we must realize that there are certain borrowers who will not consider its use. A fiction index is often thought to be an extravagance, but it would leave enquiry assistants free for more important work. We find that certain bibliographical tools are invaluable for adequate service—Dewey, an atlas, Whitaker's Reference Catalogue, a dictionary, and play and poetry indexes are a minimum.

Every newly enrolled borrower receives a letter signed by the librarian, welcoming him, and indicating the facilities of the library. In consequence many readers at once make known their special requirements, and the appropriate shelves are indicated to them. At the same time a very brief introduction to the classification and arrangement may be given, together with an encouragement to make use of the enquiry assistant. Experience shows that not every borrower welcomes a conducted tour of the library. Discrimination is needed when offering unsolicited assistance, many readers preferring to explore on their own.

We have no reason to believe that any difficulty arises through difference in sex between borrower and assistant. We find that as a rule men express their needs more lucidly than do women, and we have failed to notice any display of nervousness.

Although we find that increasing use is made of our services, there are other important aspects of our work. We are responsible for the arrangement and maintenance of book and wrapper displays. Our duties further include supervision of the replacement of books and tidiness of the shelves. We co-

The Library Assistant

operate extensively with local meetings and lectures by the distribution of books and reading lists. By introducing children of school-leaving age, we attempt to cement the connexion established by the junior libraries with the schools.

As a result of the enquiry desk service at Coventry, the counter staff are relieved to be able to attend to their work, unimpeded by a growing number of queries at the time when charging and discharging is most brisk. Junior shelvees may miss the stimulus of attempting to answer queries, but the borrower is saved from the rushed and unsystematic service, which is all that a junior can be expected to fit in with his duties.

Our experience so far leads us to believe that an enquiry desk is definitely useful, and we are convinced that a continued and increasing personal service favourably affects the reader's attitude to library activities and expansion.

Yours faithfully,

HAZEL COXON }
DOREEN CORBETT } *Readers' Advisers.*

BRANCH LIBRARY,
RECTORY ROAD,
DAGENHAM.

THE EDITOR,
THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

6th October, 1936.

DEAR SIR,—

I have read with interest the recent article and correspondence on the personal guidance of readers, and feel that members of the profession might be interested in a further development of the "personal touch" which has recently been inaugurated in the Dagenham Branch Library.

In April it was decided to attempt to form a "Reading Circle," where outstanding books, both old and new, would be brought to the notice of borrowers by means of reviews and discussions. Attractive posters were displayed, and as a result thirty names, with particulars of favourite subjects, suggestions for the most suitable evening, etc., were obtained. Eighteen borrowers attended the first meeting. This nucleus proved so enthusiastic that the idea was developed, and now the "Reading Circle" is a fully fledged and acknowledged activity with a growing membership of over one hundred and twenty. Five meetings have been held at monthly intervals during the summer, and the average attendance of over thirty augurs well for the coming winter session. The personnel of the Circle has changed from meeting to meeting, mainly on account of the "shift" system in local industries.

The Library Assistant

A word on the method of organization. Between forty and fifty books, fiction and non-fiction, in about equal proportions, are selected each month from the recent additions and from the older stock. These are issued to the staff and a group of keen borrowers, who undertake to submit a verbal appreciation or criticism. A file is kept of all members, who are notified of the next meeting by circular letter, accompanied by a list of books to be discussed. The books are displayed during the meeting, and are kept aside for privilege issue for one month.

It is pleasing to report that, at the direct request of members of this Circle, a separate class has been formed with the object of providing talks on popular subjects and offering the opportunity for debate.

Yours faithfully,

W. HOWARD PHILLIPS,
Branch Librarian.

KENSAL RISE BRANCH LIBRARY,
WILLESDEN, N.W.10.

10th October, 1936.

THE EDITOR,
THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.
DEAR SIR,—

I was surprised to read Mr. Pugsley's remarks on the no-fine system in his article "Vestigial remains," in the October issue of THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT, where he says that the number of overdue cards sent from a no-fine system is about a quarter of the average of those where fines are charged. My experience in the children's department of the Kensal Rise Library is very different. Since no fines have been charged, over four times the number of overdue notices have been dispatched. Here are the exact figures. During July, August, and September, 1935, while fines were being charged, there were thirty-five first, nine second, and six final notices, totalling fifty. During the corresponding months of this year there were one hundred and fifty first, fifty-nine second, and twenty-seven final notices, totalling two hundred and thirty-six. The children have been reprimanded far more severely than Mr. Pugsley thinks necessary, but this does not seem to have had any effect. Have Willesden children none of the "sense of civic responsibility" to which Mr. Pugsley refers? I am sure there must be some other factors governing the success of this scheme which have not been explained. Probably Mr. Pugsley's percentage refers mainly to adult overdues.

Yours faithfully,

FELICIA M. MORRIS.

A. M. HALDANE LIBRARY BOOK SUPPLY CO.

Public Libraries and County Libraries Supplied
Promptly with New Books and Remainders

4 CARLTON STREET, LOWER REGENT STREET, LONDON

Telephone and Telegraphic Address: WHITEHALL 6335 LONDON

G. BLUNT & SONS, LTD.



For the latest developments in
LIBRARY REBINDING

by the "Ideal" Guarded Every Leaf Process

THE FACSIMILE PUBLISHERS' BINDING
which is now so famous—over 2,100 bindings in stock—at 1/11 per volume, Cr. 8vo.

Lists of these bindings are issued and sent to all Librarians

Our book department also issues lists of books bound in this and other attractive styles
at "Economy" prices

Visits from Public Librarians and Assistants welcomed to our works and showrooms

NORTH ACTON ROAD, HARLESDEN, LONDON, N.W.10

LIBRARY CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE

By

J. H. PAFFORD, M.A., F.L.A.

Price £1 1s. To Members 15s. Post Free

THE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Chaucer House, Malet Place, London, W.C.1